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## Student Councils as an Agency for Character Education in Secondary Schools

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**STUDENT COUNCILS AS AN AGENCY FOR CHARACTER  
EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Sister Mary Wendelin Shean, B.V.M.**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The  
Requirements for The Degree of Master of Arts  
in Loyola University.**

**August 5, 1931**

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## INTRODUCTION

Reflection and experience have taught the teacher that what the student is, is vastly more important than what he knows; that the perfecting of knowledge, eloquence, tact and skill, is not the only objective in education, but that also, and even more so, the objective is and should be 'the student himself,' his mind, his will, his whole character.

"The teacher must know how to deal with human minds, and his chief concern, therefore, can never be with imparting anything to them, however valuable it be, but his study must be how to open them to the light, how to give them flexibility, how to make them attentive and self-active. His work is a wrestling of mind with mind, and of heart with heart; and if he simply drills his class as a whole he fails as a teacher. He is a trainer and not an educator" (44:225).

And, since the source of all that makes life delightful and precious is inner strength, or strength of mind, heart, and conscience, the highest aim and end of education should be to develop and nourish this 'inner strength' in and through character education.

In an interesting discussion on the sources of

ethical character, Morgan has this to say regarding the subject:

"Character Education comes first. It has always been first with the greatest teachers. Character comes first in business. Faith in fellowman is the foundation of the whole business structure. Character comes first in the home. . . . Character comes first in citizenship. Faithfulness to public trust is the cornerstone of modern government. Character comes first in learning. The world's great thinkers have loved truth and maintained their intellectual integrity. No workman is really effective who does not build into his task, however simple, his own spirit and honesty. It makes leisure a thing of beauty and a joy forever" (34:267).

Now, it would seem that student councils have offered, and should continue to offer, a wide field for this character education, in that they supply the student with both motives and opportunities for giving up the lower for the higher and for sacrificing minor details of his present freedom to make possible a wider and fuller future freedom. Thus, in the light of high, yet practical, ideals, the student is led to a better understanding of his duties as an individual and as a member of society--the school, the city, the state, the nation.

As to the question of student organizations and the development of character, Paul says:

"The development of character must take its origin in the inculcation of right principles, but it also requires opportunity for practical application of such principles under wise guidance. Instruction is a necessary element in the formation of character in order that we may know the right. But training is also an essential. Knowledge of the right does not insure its performance" (35:1273).

Though, in the ultimate analysis, the basis of character must be laid, firm and solid, by the home; still, the school furnishes further and special opportunities for training in character-principles. In this connection, a student organization may well serve (as one authority has put it) "as a laboratory in which character-reactions, both qualitative and quantitative, may be determined" (35:1273) and developed, under sympathetic and competent observation.

Professor Sisson has remarked that the student must learn

"that the love of freedom must transcend the narrow limits of selfishness and become generous and all embracing in its scope. . . . He must learn that to live in liberty is to live in order. . . . That the only perfect freedom is found in perfect law" (40:71).

Surely, then, the student council in that it instills into the heart of the student a realization of these facts--by presenting, as we have said, high yet attainable ideals, and affording various and varied opportu-

nities for thought and conduct towards these ideals-- should offer a very definite and practical field and method of character-training. "Training in ideals has lain dormant and has not kept pace with the development of methods of teaching" (10:276).

It was with the purpose of determining the extent to which the above more or less 'abstract reasoning' was, or might be, borne out in 'actual fact,' that we set ourselves the task of investigating the student council in the light of its value as a character training organization. The data gathered through observation and report and reading have convinced us that what has been said above with regard to the student council as an agency for character-training is eminently true. True, that is, not only as a conclusion of abstract reasoning, but substantially true, proved true, in the light of factual evidence.

The term 'student council,' then, is taken throughout as connoting: that body or group, generally so designated - The Student Council - , and, according to present practice (in our high schools) composed of either a select few or a more numerous body chosen from and by the general student body through balloting or appointment,

and (more generally, under the at least silent direction of a mature and responsible school official known as the Counselor or Adviser) acknowledged by both the school officials and by the student body as officially representing 'student' rights and interests.

This homemade definition sets forth, we take it, the fundamental features of the student council as today understood in principal and in practice. The essential feature, of course, is the 'student representation' and the 'student participation' in practical details of school discipline and school activities. The extent of this 'participation' and its field of activity will vary, necessarily, with the varying types of student council organization and program. The essential point--the point which forms the basis of our present discussion and evaluation of the student council and its influence--is that of the student body's actual participation in matters of school government and activities; this, through officially chosen representatives, who are appointed or elected from among and by the students themselves, and are recognized and honored by both students and faculty as the official representatives of the rights and interests of the general student body.



That the results of our investigation and study may be presented in more definite and orderly fashion, we shall arrange and discuss them under the four following heads:

1. History and present status of the student council.
2. Present theory as to its ethical purpose and possibilities.
3. Data on the extent to which these aims have been realized.
4. At the close, we shall submit a brief, yet fairly comprehensive, plan or outline for the organization and functioning of a student council in one of our Catholic high schools of medium enrollment.

Note: Throughout this paper the term 'student councils' and 'the student council' are used interchangeably or as synonymous; always understanding 'the student council' in the collective or generic sense of the term.

## CHAPTER I

## HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Though, as stated in our Introduction, we shall in this paper confine ourselves mainly to discussion and evaluation of the student council as it is to be found in our present-day high schools, still it will be necessary for us in reviewing the history of the organization to refer to movements at the college and university level, since in the beginning higher institutions were more actively interested in the student council than were the secondary schools.

As even the following summary history reveals, it may be reasonably questioned whether some of these earlier forms would or should be recognized or classified as student councils at all, in view of our present day student council objectives, organization, and functioning. However, as most authorities refer back, at least implicitly, to these earlier forms as containing in embryo,

as it were, the nucleus-idea (ideal?) and principal of what is today known as the student council.

As offering some historic background, then, if for no more substantial reason, we shall summarily sketch the history of this particular form of school or student organization from some of its earlier manifestations or vague foreshadowings up to the well-defined, definitely classified, and more elaborate student council of the present time.

Student councils as an agency for character education are not a new idea. The famous Humanist Vittore dei Rambaldoni--better known as Vittorino da Feltre from the town of his birth--was probably its first advocate when, in his celebrated Court School of Mantua (1378-1446), he endeavored to give his pupils a harmonious development of body, mind and morals, and stressed the practical and social side of the individual's efficiency while aiming to prepare his pupils for a life of activity and service. A pupil of his has stated that the master desired to educate men who would serve both God and state in any position they would be called upon to occupy. Vittorino was entirely absorbed in his pupils; studied their interests, their abilities, and the avocation contemplated

by each. He has been quoted as saying:

"We are not to expect that every boy will display the same tastes or the same degree of mental capacity; and, whatever our own predilection may be, we recognize that we must follow nature's lead. Now she has endowed no one with aptitude for all kinds of knowledge, very few, indeed, have talent in three or four directions, but every one has received some gift, if only we can discover it" (51:126).

Another acknowledged authority, in discussing this Court School of Mantua, has said:

"The instruction given was of the new humanist type, but Christian in character and spirit. It was not merely a literary training, but embraced the physical and moral requirements of a liberal education. Vittorino's academy was preeminently a preparatory or training school for life, as Monnier describes it, 'un institut de vie'" (53:182).

Vittorino paid special attention to individual differences; and, making much use of private direction and exhortation, he attained marked success in dealing with faults and in building character. His corrections were not administered immediately upon the discovery of an offense. He made study attractive and more profitable by giving particular attention to individuals, and he allowed his pupils a voice in the management of the school.

Formation of character has, of course, always been regarded as an important objective--if not even the main

objective--in education. In 1763 the noted English reformer Thomas Wright Hill in his renowned school at Hazelwood--on the outskirts of Birmingham--gave special attention to character formation and the inculcating of right ideas of moral duty, including a sense of civic obligation, a love of justice and the cultivation of social sympathy. That the Hazelwood system was internationally approved seems evident from the fact that numbers of pupils from the newly founded republics of South America and from Greece were in attendance, and that a school on somewhat similar lines was erected in Stockholm. Hill's ideal was a judiciously supervised, self-governing boy democracy. He established in his school a system of elective local government, and thus the Hazelwood system anticipated later experiments in the formation of the school city. Quoting from Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education*:

"But the vital significance of the educational doctrine of the Hills lay in its emphasis upon the moral and spiritual power which may be developed through the wise organization of corporate life in a skillfully ordered community. This is the conception which appealed to Thomas Arnold (q. v.), and to which he gave effective development at Rugby, with far-reaching results upon higher education throughout the world. . . . One defect of their scheme, as of Dr. Arnold's was that their school bore no organic relation

to the public life of the adult community which it served. The Hills in their private school, like Dr. Arnold in the endowed school at Rugby, were, though intensely civic in purpose, unconsciously separatist in their influence upon subsequent educational organization" (53:279).

A former pupil, W. L. Sargent, wrote of it:

"By juries and committees, by marks and by appeals to a sense of honour, discipline was maintained. But this was done at too great a sacrifice. The thoughtlessness, the spring the elation of childhood were taken from us we were premature men" (53:279)..

The Lancasterian schools hold their place, too, in the gradual development of student councils. When Joseph Lancaster opened his first school in 1798, his enthusiasm and natural aptitude for governing children (combined with the aid of food and clothes, which the benevolence of some Quakers enabled him to distribute during a trying winter) made his school so popular that its enrollment became too great for him alone to control. Not having sufficient means to pay the salaries of teachers to assist him, he devised a system of discipline and instruction whereby the children who were more proficient taught those who were less advanced and thus, by the use of this monitorial or "mutual" method of instruction, the one thousand pupils who were in attendance at this school acquired some proficiency in

reading, writing, and arithmetic. Lancaster's method proved satisfactory, as is evidenced from the fact that, when in 1818 he decided to begin life in the New World, we find that the knowledge of the success of the Lancasterian system had preceded him and he was most cordially welcomed. Moreover, in 1825, Bolivar, the "Liberator of South America," invited Lancaster to come south and organize schools in the young Republic.

While the Lancasterian schools had their defects, especially in their negative or 'don't' rules and their comparatively slight redress from injustice, they served a valuable purpose in the early stages of national education in Europe and America.

Lancaster had the genius and ability to gain the loyalty of his pupils and to inspire them with a love for their work and a pride in the system of which they formed a part. His insistence upon helpful mutual aid and the realization of the needs of combined efforts towards the accomplishment of any common good, undoubtedly aided in developing character traits; notably, group consciousness, co-operation, and respect for self and others.

In the United States it seems probable that Thomas

Jefferson was the first advocate of student participation in school government. Certain it is that his views on university organization included the adoption of an elective system and the reduction of discipline to a minimum.

"Jefferson's views on university organization included: (1) the abolition of a prescribed curriculum and the adoption of an elective system, and (2) the reduction of discipline to a minimum, 'avoiding too much government, by requiring no useless observances, none which shall merely multiply occasions for dissatisfaction, disobedience and revolt.' The purpose of a state university, as he saw it, was (3) to develop the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals and instill in them the precept of virtue and order" (53:540).

While father of the University of Virginia, he warmly advocated various forms of student participation.

Among other instances of an approach to the student council idea we might mention the following. The first honor system at the University of Virginia was established in 1842. (28:436) The University of South Carolina claims that their honor system started in 1801. Both the University of South Carolina and William and Mary College had honor systems before 1842.

"In 1779, however, the faculty of the College of William and Mary, inspired by their ideal of democracy and by faith in human nature, appointed a committee to draft a plan of college



discipline which should be in keeping with the 'liberal and magnanimous' attitude of the college toward its students. . . . The fundamental principle of this plan of college discipline which came to be known as the 'honor system' was that of individual responsibility in matters involving the students' honor" (13:398).

An editor of 1881 asserts that the most fundamental and important change in society of his day was the progress of human freedom, not in mere escape from restraints. He found it a very interesting question to note how the various educational systems were and had been related to this great tendency. He remarked:

"It can not be denied that they have had some share in promoting it, but their influence on the whole must be counted as powerfully adverse to it" (46:557).

According to this editor there seemed to be little recognition of the principle that character formation was and is the essential and supreme work of education.

However, that training in self-government could be a valuable factor in the developing of the moral nature of the student was recognized by educators of that day.

An authority of 1886 said:

"But one who, from without, had observed the subtle sympathy with the demands of the new system which has been developed in the student-mind in the five years since its adoption, and the readiness with which the faculty have been able to meet the unexpected exigencies of its workings, can hardly fail

of the conviction that a day not distant will witness the evolution of the ideal student as of the ideal faculty, with whom alone the republican system of college government is ideally possible" (22:485).

In 1893 Dr. Cronson, after careful study of weekly class meetings as occasions for training in self-control, self-initiative, and self-direction, concluded that the moral influence of these class-meetings far surpassed in value their intellectual influence. His experience made it clear that self-government awakened a more practical appreciation of the necessity and value of right conduct; also, that the arriving at definite decisions helped to form habits of correct judgment and a more steadfast will to act on these decisions through a sense of duty.

In many of the states student government followed the democratic plan. This was true, for example, in Dr. Cronson's 'School City'. Dr. Cronson was aided in this undertaking by Mr. Wilson L. Gill, the organizer of the Patriotic League of America in 1891. Mr. Gill, recognizing the possibilities of self-government, gave breadth, coherence, and definiteness to this movement.

The 'School City' started in School #69 in New York by Dr. Cronson, with the aid of Mr. Gill, was a pronounced success.

"When this scheme of pupil self-government proved a success in Public School #69, it rapidly found its way into a number of other schools, both in this and in other cities, having been introduced there by those who either had observed its operation or had read of it in some periodical" (48:5).

While the 'School City' worked admirably well in New York 'School City,' ventures in other cities were not wholly successful.

Another form of student government which followed the democratic plan was the 'Junior Republic.' The 'Junior Republic' was first organized in 1895 by William A. George in Freeville, New York. Under Mr. George, the 'Junior Republic' proved successful, but the same scheme tried elsewhere often proved a failure.

Turning to the next decade, we find that a student council was functioning satisfactorily at the Oregon, Agricultural College in 1911.

"In the beginning it was feared that the students might mistake liberty for license, but this was not the case. . . . In reality, however, there was a constant but slow revolution which was directed by the governing board and which resulted in creating a continually growing feeling of responsibility on the part of the students. Nor did the effect end here, for responsibility soon led to positive action and the development of a sense of initiative" (64:4).

The Student Council at Harvard was recorded as

successful in 1912, at which time a newspaper stated "that Harvard had at last evolved an effective system of student self-government" (61:5). It would seem that through this organization many of the hitherto common conflicts of social events at Harvard were prevented and that class feeling was reduced to a minimum.

The same year Lester, by means of questionnaires addressed to the dean or president of each of 350 colleges and universities throughout the United States, investigated the extent and workings of the honor system. Two hundred eighty replies to the questionnaires spoken of above were received. Lester states that: "The investigation as regards extent showed that 29 per cent of American colleges use some sort of honor system" (28:436).

The following year, 1913, Leupp, speaking from experience on the progressive ideal in school management observed that "the girls have so framed their rules that the prevailing spirit everywhere is one of respect for the authorities they have themselves constituted" (29:391).

Stevens, in 1914, speaks of the honor system as follows: "It is, as Dr. Sparrow has well shown, merely

an element; the most important element in the broader system of student self-government" (43:754).

In 1915, a student council was organized in the Normal School of Edinboro, Pa., as an experiment in school democracy; and in less than a year the principal declared that "a new spirit is prevading the school; teachers and students are closer together than ever before" (4:38).

Hunter, in 1916, wrote an account of an experiment which showed how interest was aroused and the cooperation of 6,000, pupils secured by a student organization.

In 1918, Inglis enumerated three important fields of opportunity for training to social-consciousness and social cooperation, one of which was the government or control of the pupil body. He asserted that "the American democracy depends for its existence and success on the social consciousness and social cooperation of its citizens." He was of the opinion, that training in the government or control of the pupil body was one of the three most important fields of opportunity for attaining this end. However, this authority affirms that:

"The emphasis above laid on training in self-government through self-government should not lead to the conclusion that the control and discipline of the pupil body in the secondary

school can be left to the pupils. It should, however, lead to the conclusion that from the beginning of education in the lower grades and in increasing degree throughout the school responsibility for various forms of self-government should be placed on the pupils themselves as fast as it may appear that they are able to bear the burden successfully" (52:720).

In 1918, Bowden wrote in defense of the theory that cooperation and social interaction could best be developed through some form of student self-government of gradual growth and development. He remarked that "it takes a long time for such ideas to take root sufficiently to prompt action" (7:100).

After witnessing three experiments in pupil self-government Smith asserted that pupil self-government was democratic; that is was progressive, that it developed thinkers, that it gave play for initiative, and made possible training for leadership.

"Is pupil self-government worth while? One may answer this question best by asking a second, for upon the answer to the second depends the answer to the first. Is the development of a democratic, self-reliant, resourceful, thinking student body more worth while than turning out a made-to-measure, forced fed, mentally-dyspeptic, memory-laden student body? To those who advocate the thought method of teaching, without doubt self-government is worth while. To the memory stuffers, it would be merely a source of trouble" (41:230).

Clapp advocated pupil self-government as a means to help pupils to form habits of self-reliance, self-expression, self-government and self-development.

"I judge this question most important because of my experience with pupil self-government during twenty years without interruption, and on account of its indescribable benefit to delight in learning, certainly in remembering, fluency of speech, readiness in composition, altruistic relations, excellent discipline, good manners, good motives, and good citizenship in the making" (13:593).

In 1919, Barton concluded from his experience that student government as a means of control was a saving to the teaching and supervisory forces of a school and served as a check on student conduct in classes. "In fact as far as the "physical behavior" of the student is concerned we have forgotten that we are in charge of the school" (5:628).

Two years later, Jones in an article on student co-operation in school government enumerated the student council's advantages to the pupils and to the school.

This same year (1921), Stahl, in relating an experiment in pupil self-government which failed remarked: "It seems to me that the idea is right and the plan worth trying over and over again. I expect to, at any rate, and, under somewhat different conditions, hope for

success" (42:533).

Pound wrote an interesting article describing how a school became a democracy for citizens, and trained the students in the actual experiences of life.

"The student council is a cooperative and not a governing body. It fosters all the important school activities such as debating, athletics, the school carnival and so on. It takes the lead in organizing the pupils to observe certain regulations which are necessary in order to keep the school machinery running smoothly" (36:512).

In 1922, at a meeting of the Iowa State Teacher's Association, a questionnaire pertaining to student councils was given to a group of high-school principals. About one hundred schools were represented, but only sixty-two returned the questionnaires. Out of the sixty-two only thirteen reported having a student council. That is, only twenty-one per cent had student councils.

In this study, made by Archer in 1922, only twenty-eight per cent of the schools, which answered his questionnaire, were found to have any form of student government.

"A recent study of the 1080 high schools accredited by the North Central Association revealed the fact that 306, or 28.3 per cent, of the schools have some form of partial or complete government" (3:434).



During this same year, Gibson, a high-school adviser of girls, contributed a concrete account of her work in an experiment in social education. She remarked that:

"This is the day of the boy and the girl; they want to know for themselves; they want to act for themselves; and with the lack of restraint of present-day conditions, they usually do. There are many who can be only pessimistic when the girl of today is mentioned, but if her enthusiasm, her energy, and her initiative are founded on right knowledge and educated through constructive effort, there is much more hope for the world than could be expected from an attitude of indifference and passivity" (16:613).

In 1924, McNutt in a case study of ethical standards for public schools, states twenty objectives or aims of student cooperation and fifteen results which teachers ought to hope to receive from student cooperation. (32:393-405)

Horst in speaking of the value of student participation in high school responsibility made the statement:

"The advantages of this work, to the students who serve on the committee, are very evident. It breaks down so-called class distinction; it develops human sympathy; it develops the use of tact and gives the girl who wants to take up social service work later in life, a real foundation for her career" (21:354).

"It must be remembered, also, that many pupil-participation plans are in their infancy and

have not been in operation long enough in most instances to have provided opportunity for the development of the new stimuli in the new environment" said Voelker, a graduate student of Chicago University in 1926.

Rugg undertook an extensive investigation of student participation in school government. His analysis of fifty articles dealing with the topic, revealed; first, the frequency and rank of the chief objectives in government; second, the chief obstacles administrators find or may expect to find in the management of student participation in school government; and third, what the literature published through more than two decades tells about principles upon which student participation in school control is or should be established (38:90-94).

In 1925, Chamberlain, after two years observation of classes above fifth grade participating in school government, felt justified in asserting that:

"Children placed in authority soon realize that with authority there goes responsibility, and here again is reflected social life outside the school. Then there is that very subtle, but very forcible factor in civic life, public opinion. . . . There is very little danger of those possessed of some authority becoming autocratic. They realize only too quickly, in many instances, that their just powers arise from the consent of the governed" (12:610).

The same year, Jones, in an illuminating article on

the three principles underlying the administration of extra-curricula activities, has this to say:

"Student co-operation is merely an extension into the extra-curricular field of the idea of supervised study and of the laboratory method of instruction, in that student co-operation is supervised training in citizenship. . . . Or, we may think of the principle of student co-operation as being an extension of the socialized-recitation idea, in that it encourages every pupil to 'get into the game' and makes him feel his personal responsibility for its success" (25:510).

Lowe said:

"Students who have proved their capacity for intelligent self-control in our high schools should make a type of citizen independent in thought and self-reliant in action, which bodes well for the future" (31:55).

The next year, (1926) Caley, in discussing ways and means of teaching respect for authority suggested that the principal accord himself the position of a constitutional monarch, and let the students aid in the drawing up of a constitution and the promulgating of a code of laws for their government.

"In such a combination you will have the 'inner urge' by the pupils and the 'outer urge' to be used by the teacher or principal when needed. With the training which this system entails, there is little doubt but that respect for law and authority will be one of the outstanding results of the student's education" (9:70).

During the same year, Abele summarized the results of the student council in which he was interested, as follows:

"The Student Council has functioned successfully in overcoming disorder in the badly crowded lunchroom, in managing clean-up campaigns, in securing community co-operation, and in carrying out a variety of other projects" (1:777).

In May, 1927, N. Robert Ringdahl, with the assistance of the United States Bureau of Education sent Questionnaires to 250 representative high schools of the states and in the District of Columbia. These questionnaires contained questions dealing with the student council, and were answered by 179 schools. As the Report claims:

"It would seem, therefore, that a substantially true cross section of conditions as they exist is portrayed by the results" (37:329).

The returns showed that 68 7/10 per cent had a student council. One of the student councils had been in existence for twenty-three years; four for twenty, five for fifteen, seventeen for two years, nine had existed for one year, and four had just organized. The report concludes:

"It would appear that the council is a relatively new form of student organization and

that it is functioning in a very helpful way both in the matter of actual achievement for the schools and in the training given those who participate" (37:329).

Douglass effectively pointed out that student government organizations do not always accomplish the ends expected of them, and he stressed the need of an adviser to guard against these possible weaknesses. The adviser should "realize that the whole scheme may deteriorate into a scramble for offices and that young students may become petty politicians" (49:640).

Geistweit insists that "everyone in a democracy has a definite responsibility in seeing that the other fellow does not endanger the rights of the group as a whole" (63:6).

We also found, in 1927, an "all campus committee" supplementing the student council at Williams.

"Williams has had student government longer than most educational institutions in the country, and it is in an attempt to keep this feature of undergraduate life a vital and important one that the new system has been inaugurated" (63:6).

Michel claims that children should be raised up "to a position of social partnership, in which there is something of the relation of give and take, since there are always on both sides, or in both parties, duties or obligations as well as rights" (33:155).

In 1928, another educator while advocating character education through extra-curricular activities said:

"The new discipline is based upon a school that is democratic, one in which the pupils are represented. The dictation has changed to guidance and the 'don't' to the 'do,' with fairness for everyone the absolute rule. Because of this new discipline, the conviction that the only worthy control is from within has grown up" (92:537).

The same year Greenough in speaking about the Student Council at Harvard made the following remark:

"The student council does most of its work through standing committees, and those committees every now and then make reports" (17:529).

After participating in an experiment in character-training in the Lyndale School, Minneapolis, in the year 1928, Boysen concluded "that growth in character would produce growth in scholarship" (8:262).

In the year book of Boone Public High School in Iowa, for 1930, the following quotation appeared:

"The Student Council was organized last year, . . . but it was not very active. However, this year, such an organization was found to be needed to help the administrative officers in sponsoring activities which concern the student body generally" (60:40).

Wyman states the achievements of the student association as follows:

"A student association as a whole fosters the best kind of public spirit. It moulds public opinion along the right lines. It encourages high standards, establishes a definite purpose. It promotes the interests of student government and other worth while activities which represent the school. It emphasizes training in good citizenship and in sterling character" (45:303).

Tighe, too, advocated character education through extra-curricular activities. Tighe was of the opinion that only through practice in decisions, with unrestrained responsibility for the consequences, could sound group or individual conduct be developed. According to this authority:

"Everything which contributes to the life experiences of a child may be considered as having a positive or negative influence in his physical, mental, and moral development, the experiences in which he is positively receptive-active, will have a stronger tendency to develop habitual traits of character than experiences in which he is only negatively receptive-inactive except perhaps in an intellectual or faintly emotional way" (44:537).

Heil, at this period, sanctioned pupil participation in the government of the Junior High School. He believed pupil participation could be used as a transitional unit from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adult life.

"Pupil participation finds its place in it,

therefore, as the transitional unit, making the transitions from the more or less necessarily extraneous control of childhood, through the desirable cooperative (pupil and teacher) control of early adolescence, to the self-control and social disposition needed by the adult" (19:160).

Johnson also at this time, summed up the aims of character education as follows:

- "(1) the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
- (2) the desire to choose the right instead of the wrong, and
- (3) the ability to do and the habit of doing the right in real situations in life" (24:397).

As he points out:

"... Learning results only from doing and the program for moral education can not stop with information or to be concerned chiefly with it, but must provide for activity" (24:397).

McKnown claimed that these activities

"prepare the student for a life in a democracy, make them increasingly self-directive, teach cooperation, increase their interest in the school, foster sentiments of law and order, and develop special abilities" (27:5).

Loomis insists that the "challenging job of the parents and the teachers is to help the child meet his life situations manfully and successfully" (30:217).

We find in the year book of Mundelein for 1931 that:



"The Student Activities Council, . . . is the medium through which student co-operation in government at Mundelein is affected. The purpose of the council is to provide an effective means of communication between the student body and the authorities, to exercise a general supervision over student activities, organizations, traditions, and customs, and 'to crystallize and make effective the sanest of student opinions.' The students of the college are aware that the efficiency of the council depends completely upon them, and that it devolves upon them to co-operate and pledge their full support in making this council one of the strongest organizations in the school" (59:64).

So much for the History of the student council, from what may be said to have been its actual beginnings (in the United States) in the first part of the last century up to the present time.

In concluding this section, we may remark, as a matter of general comment, that, while the efficiency of the student council seems (in the earlier times) to have depended mainly, if not all but entirely, upon the personality of the school officials in charge, the student council has in the course of time come to function more independently.

What we mean is this. The personality and more exceptional talent or ability of the individual principal or counselor counts, and ever will and must count, for much in the direction and in the functioning of any

school organization; but we believe that between the lines, in the above data on the history and progress of the student council, can be read a gradual trend away from the earlier follow-the-leader methods.

Even today, of course, the efficiency and smooth functioning of the student council depends to a notable extent upon the school-faculty member or members who are in charge. More and more, however, as the functioning, aims, purposes and ideals of the student council are coming to be better known and understood by the student-body, more and more are the students themselves learning to appreciate their responsibilities, and, consequently, to prepare and fit themselves for a personal, individual and independent measuring up to these responsibilities of office or duty in connection with the student council.

The above noted reflections are, we feel, in place at the conclusion of our survey of the history and trend of the student council, indicating as they do what we believe to be the present day trend and tendency. More detailed consideration of the present day aims and purposes, and the extent to which these objectives have been attained or achieved, will be offered in another section of this paper.

## CHAPTER II

### PRESENT THEORY AS TO ETHICAL PURPOSE AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

In making even the brief resume of the history and present status of the student council which we have offered in the preceding section we concluded that the purposes of the student council have been, and continue to be, as various as its fields of activity are wide, and, thus far at least, none too exactly limited or defined. However, even a superficial analysis of these purposes makes it clear that, whatever other objectives are in view, that of character-training is outstanding. So evident is this, that we feel justified in selecting this particular objective as embodying the 'ethical purpose' of the student council. Over and above the immediate objective of securing better and more acceptable discipline through the official participation and co-operation of the students themselves, the higher (and deeper) ethical objective of the student council is,

manifestly, the developing and strengthening of a sense of responsibility. This 'sense of responsibility'--to self and to society--may be said to constitute character in one very practical sense of the term; for, when this intellectual 'sense' is materialized in 'action,' then we have character portraying and manifesting itself in the full--the individual's whole conduct, in both concept and execution.

Moreover, in the case of the student council, this test and development of character effects not only the individual himself but likewise the whole group or organization of which he is a member.

With these considerations as a premise, we may now take up the consideration of the 'ethical purpose' of the student council.

The ethical purpose of the student council, as at present understood and organized, may be said to be fundamentally the training of character. The end of this training is twofold:

- (a) To help the student to form and strengthen his character--his perfection as an individual;
- (b) To help the student to better and more fully understand his place in the school (incidentally, in the

city, the state, the nation)--his perfection as a member of society. We shall treat of these aims, or purposes, separately.

As to the first of these purposes--that of perfecting the student as an individual the student council, it would seem, achieves this particular aim by helping the student to form desirable habits. A human being, inasmuch as he is a human being--not an animal, a mere brute--is directed and governed by something radically different from mere instinct. That 'something' is his intelligence and his will (for in the completed act both co-operate): his intelligence directing him as to what is right or wrong, commendable or blameworthy; his will acting upon this direction, and, where character has been properly formed, all this always in accord with correct ethical standards. An authority on educational aims has said:

"Education consists in large part in 'making our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy.' And any youth who is forming a large number of useful habits is receiving no mean education, no matter if his knowledge of books may be limited; on the other hand, no one who is forming a large number of bad habits is being well educated, no matter how brilliant his knowledge may be. . . . Those who in youth have no opportunity to habituate themselves to the usages of society may study books on eti-

quette and employ private instructors in the art of polite behavior all they please later in life, but they will never cease to be awkward and ill at ease" (47:61).

Here is where the student council may prove exceptionally beneficial. Every student has high ideals and hopes to be noble, loyal, great and true; but like numbers of students in the past who have had those same ideals, he too, may prove a failure unless he develops habits of achievement, of effort and of self-sacrifice.

"Every bit of heroic self-sacrifice, every battle fought and won, every good deed performed, ----will finally add its mite toward achieving the success of your ambition" (47:68).

Therefore, in so far as the student council affords each and every student of the school an opportunity for the formation of these habits--self-sacrifice, effort, achievement--it is surely a powerful influence in character education.

To quote Thorndike:

"The art of human life is to change the world for the better--to make things, animals, plants, men and oneself more serviceable for life's ends. Trees grow regardless of man's intent, but he prunes or trains them the better to satisfy his own wants, or plants others for the common good. Children, too, grow in part by inner impulses apart from man's direction, but man tries to change their original natures into forms which serve his needs. Each man singly tries, by

producing certain changes and preventing others, to make the world of things and men better for himself; a group of men living together, so far as they possess wisdom, try to make things and men better for the group as a whole" (57:1).

The second purpose or aim of the student council is as we have stated, the development of the socially efficient individual--the productive person capable of adding something to the world's prosperity and willing to further the advancement of others even at a sacrifice of his own time, energy, and desires. Here the organization and functioning of the student councils offers very special advantages.

Not least among these advantages may be reckoned a spirit of healthy self-respect and social responsibility: self-respect, in the knowledge of personal, individual worth and power; social responsibility, in the realization that this personal worth and power is to be not for self but for others also--the school, the community. We know that education is not for the individual alone; still less for the state alone--as though the individual citizen were but a mere cog in the machine! No; true education takes into account both the individual and the state; it looks to both objectives, the individual and society.

The student council, with its 'little world' of social contacts and activities, offers, as we have said, exceptional advantages for the student to understand and develop his 'social sense,' and to prepare himself intellectually and morally to meet and measure up with his social responsibilities.

There is, again, the matter of ideals. Without ideals no substantial or lasting effect can be hoped for from human endeavor. It is an essential duty of education, and of the educator, to present and uphold ideals. Here the student council, by presenting and honoring truly worthy ideals of ethical conduct and of individual and social service, can prove itself a force of exceptional value and influence in elevating youths' concept and understanding and appreciation of what is worthy, good and true.

Commenting upon the social value of student participation in school control, one educator states that:

"First, student co-operation in school government has helped many to appreciate the meaning of an education to such a degree that it has changed their life career."

"Second, student co-operation in school control provides definite training in initiative."

"Third, student co-operation in school



control develops personality and character through leadership responsibility."

"Fourth, co-operation in school control gives to the students a sense of pride in the school and a vision of service."

"Fifth, student co-operation in school control develops true citizenship through the social motive, the do-in-co-operation spirit" (55:35).

It is plain, then, that through its very purpose and organization the student council awakens and fosters the student's social sense. The definite purpose and organization instill a sense of objective and order; while the many occasions offered for judging and determining the 'balance' between individual preference and social obligation inculcate and strengthen habits of self-control and generous self-sacrifice. Reliability, obedience, industry, self-control, judgment, punctuality, social attitudes, initiative, personal habits, and thrift-- these are some of the character traits which the student council aims to implant and develop in the student as a social being.

"It should be the aim of the high school to provide sufficient practice in self-control so that the pupil may develop initiative and responsibility. It may readily be inferred from the program laid out for functional education that the chief object of such education is character building, for the emphasis has been laid upon the optimum development of human nature. Self-respecting, self-re-

liant, active personalities are to be desired," (58:264).

Indeed, educators who have followed the workings of the student council for years, are as one in commenting upon and commending the powerful and practical influence of the student council in this particular field, namely, that of 'social responsibility and service.'

"Those schools which have practiced pupil participation for several years reported improvement in moral conditions, better co-operation with the home, the development of a higher degree of loyalty among the pupils, increased respect for the teachers, a larger number of pupils participating in community affairs, a better understanding of the principles of government, and attainment of higher qualifications for leadership" (15:442).

What has been said above illustrates in some way what the student council has in view, and achieves, in its great ethical purpose of character-training. Besides this, or perhaps as a corollary to this chief ethical aim, we may refer briefly to another ethical aim, notably that which concerns citizenship.

It stands to reason that true education must ever have as one of its aims, that of teaching the student how to live a life worth while. Here, to the slogan "Learn by Doing" the student council with its practical motives and ideals should be a factor, very helpful in the se-

curing of proper attitudes towards life and its problems. Thus another ethical purpose of the student council is the presentation and maintenance of worthy ideals of citizenship. A leader of thought has said:

"The young need to be shown that contentment, cheerfulness and the cutting down of one's personal wants are important factors in right living. Those who have lived successfully have done so because they succeeded in curbing their selfish impulse. Students continually hear talk of big money; they see pictures of what wealth can apparently do; they are told to make a name for themselves (which means to make money) and hence they feel that if they obtain wealth they will have obtained all" (39:146).

Since the student's sentiments are a natural growth from the experiences upon which they are nourished and have a large influence in determining the direction of his further development, it would seem that the student council--which supplies the student with some of the deepest, the most constant and most powerful of motives for true patriotism, loyalty, liberty, friendship, and love--should be here again of notable ethical value. Dr. Betts says pointedly: "Let us know a man's sentiments on religion, morality, friendship, honesty, and the other great questions of life, and little remains to be known" (47:192). And Spalding, in writing on the Teacher and the School, concludes:

"We are men only so far as we are self-active,  
. . . It is by rousing us to self-activity  
that God and nature work upon us, and it is  
by doing this that the teacher educates"  
(56:211).

We will close this section of our paper with the following quotation from "Student Co-operation in School Government," which sums up neatly what our investigations have made clear to us of the value of the student council in instilling and cultivating that 'social sense' which works for loyal and effective citizenship.

"Our final conclusion on the results of student government is that it is of tremendous value in citizenship training. Citizenship can not be made by signing papers or studying books; it must be lived. As supervised study is a laboratory method of learning a subject, supervised self-government is a laboratory method of learning citizenship. Student co-operation in school government develops a high sense of responsibility regarding community affairs. It habituates those qualities of citizenship most highly desirable in a free democracy" (25:257).

## CHAPTER III

## DATA ON REALIZATION OF THESE AIMS

The chief aim of the student council, as we have endeavored to make clear in the preceding section, is character-training; this, both for individual and social benefit and efficiency.

In this present section we shall endeavor to set forth, in some detail, the extent to which this aim or purpose has been achieved. In so doing, we shall not hesitate to include specific mention of wherein and why this aim may have failed of achievement. 'Errando discimus' may be rendered freely, 'We can, and should draw much profit from the study of our own (and others) mistakes.' This is all the more true and applicable in the instance of the student council, still in the 'adolescent' stage, and therefore highly capable of improvement and development.

Research reveals that educators who have made ex-

haustive studies of the student council throughout the United States are united in their opinion that some of the most outstanding obstacles--difficulties and problems--in connection with the student council are the following:

1. Lack of sympathy; understanding and co-operation on the part of the faculty.
2. Lack of co-operation on the part of the students.
3. The difficulty of securing responsible leaders.
4. Opposition on the part of the faculty because it--the student council--makes work of administrators difficult and complicated.
5. Difficulty of getting all pupils to participate in some activity.
6. Lack of enthusiasm.
7. Difficulty of getting students to assume responsibility.

However, the existence of the student council in the secondary or high school can be justified by proving that it meets several of the objectives of secondary education --citizenship, worthy home membership, worthy use of leisure, ethical character, training in leadership--and that it serves the majority of the student body.

The value, and even need, of the student council as a means of teaching citizenship may be more fully realized through a perusal of the following quotes:

"One of the best reasons for the existence of extra-curricular activities, including student participation in school government, . . . is the opportunities offered for training in citizenship" (49:32).

"We believe that lessons in citizenship must function somehow thru practical activities and that all that is taught should be vitalized thru experience" (14:366).

"A larger laboratory is needed which approaches in conditions those in which the pupil as an adult must live and serve. This laboratory is the entire school, which must be organized and administered so that the pupil will acquire civic experience through participation, form civic habits through practice, and develop civic attitudes through successfully relating knowing and doing" (50:48).

"By creating in the child the feeling that he will be shown consideration and allowed a voice in his own destiny we shall be developing in actuality a citizen conscious of his own power and obligated to the state which effects his larger destiny. By such training and by such training only, can we hope to make democracy safe for the world" (6:396).

Training in leadership is another objective of secondary education which may be developed through the student council. The potential leader needs training in self-control, fairness, and impartiality, and here is where the student council offers valuable aid.

"Student co-operation in school control develops personality and character through leadership responsibility" (55:38).

"Trains in leadership and responsibility" (37:336).

"This means of control is saving to the teaching and supervisory forces of our schools . . . it serves as a wonderful check on student conduct in classes;" (5:626).

Again, the student council has shown itself to be particularly helpful in accustoming and training the student body to conform their judgment to that of authority, vested in the teacher, the principal, or a fellow student.

One of the first lessons which youth has to learn--often a hard lesson, too--is that lawfully constituted authority must be obeyed if man is to accomplish anything through concerted and directed effort. Free expression of opinion and open discussion may (and, in the student council does) precede the determining of this authority, either as to person or powers or both. But, once the authority and its limits have been duly appointed and determined, law abiding man obeys. Should experience make clear the necessity of further curtailment or enlargement of the authority in question or its powers, this can be taken up in further 'official' meeting and



discussion and decision.

The point in all this is, that, through his experience in and with the student council, the student comes to sense and realize, in a very practical manner, the necessity of respect for and obedience to all properly constituted authority.

Again, the student council is of great benefit in encouraging and keeping alive what is known as 'school spirit.' Here the council helps notably in the opportunity and assurance it offers or affords for that all-together effort--and participation in the consequent success or failure--which gives true school spirit its charm and power. Even though there is and must be competent and controlling adult supervision (though the ideal is to have this reduced to the minimum), the students unquestionably enjoy a fuller sense of spontaneous effort and achievement when their various programs and activities--and even matters of otherwise dull routine or chafing discipline--are projected, determined, and put into effect by the authority and powers of their student council.

"But best of all is a spirit--a subtle something --that has crept into the school as a whole. In place of the former selfish, individualistic at-

titude which was so characteristic of the members of the student body, the DeWitt Clinton boy is beginning to think of the other fellow and his rights, and he is learning the best lesson of the future citizen, that of co-operation with authority for the common good" (23:707).

Mention has already been made of the questionnaire study made in May, 1927, by Professor N. Robert Ringdahl with the assistance of the United States Bureau of Education. We would refer those interested to the complete report. Suffice it here to quote a few items which are particularly illuminating. To the question, "What are some of the definite achievements of your council?" the following are representative answers.

"1. Improved traffic and order in corridors. 2. Published handbook. 3. Established point system for activities. 4. Conducted assemblies. 5. Regulated lunch-room. 6. Managed ticket sales. 7. Conducted 'clean-up campaign.' 8. Adopted standard emblem. 9. Improved order in auditorium. 10. Raised scholarship. 11. Reduced theft. 12. Improved building and grounds.

In answer to, "Comment in your own words on the desirability of councils, the field for usefulness, and the chief dangers to be guarded against." the following were some of the more instructive replies.

- "1. I would not attempt to operate a high school without one. It must be advised carefully and closely.
- "2. Good, but pupils must not feel that they are absolute in power.
- "3. Necessary to have group that can speak for all pupils. Don't give too much power. Good, though activities are perfunctory.
- "4. Very desirable as we have it but dangerous if given too much power.
- "5. Aids in interpreting and in molding school opinion. Danger in that pupils may feel that they are the source of authority.
- "6. No danger. The student council is the most powerful organization in our school.
- "7. When under control, it is fine. The chief danger is to give it the power of discipline.
- "8. I wouldn't be without one. Through it, principal and student body meet officially.
- "9. I consider the experience gained by the pupils in the council probably the most valuable of their high school career. It holds over into after life.
- "10. I cannot conceive of a successful high school without one. Danger lies in either lack of, or too much, control by principal and faculty.
- "11. A necessity in a democratic school today. Great aid to principal in keeping in touch with pupils.
- "12. No high school should be without one. Students should learn to lead, to choose leaders, and to follow intelligently. No

other device will do this as well.

- "13. A well-organized student government makes an excellent laboratory for teaching civics. Pupils should recognize that they are subject to the decision of the faculty" (37:333).

The above statements, and the data given here and elsewhere in this paper, indicate clearly enough that 'opinion' is anything but unanimous on the question as to just what should constitute the field of the student council's activities, and just what authority should be granted to or vested in the student council or its officers. Quite evidently, a great deal depends upon the tact and ability of the principal, the teacher, or whoever is ultimately responsible for the organization and the behind-the-scenes direction of the student council.

We neither can nor should ever lose sight of the very essential fact that, in this whole question of student councils, or, as it is sometimes called, student government, we are concerned with 'students;' therefore, with adolescents, not adults. Now, with all due respect for individuality, spontaneity, self-determination, and the rest, youth is 'youth'--not maturity--and hence is, by very nature of its 'youthfulness,' imma-

ture, inexperienced, and lacking in that perspective and solidity which age and hard experience alone can secure.

What has just been said, furnishes, we feel, the key to the whole situation. It explains why so much depends - and ever must depend - upon able and tactful supervision. It explains, too, why, when all is said and done, the consensus of experienced opinion is, that the finer and more weighty responsibilities of school government and classroom management had better not be entrusted - certainly, not completely - to the legislation and execution of the student council.

As every experienced school official and teacher knows, there is, in the hundred and one lesser details of school discipline and school activities, field enough and to spare for the initiative and energies and endeavors, spontaneous or suggested, of the student council.

Summing up, we feel we are justified in maintaining, in view of the data submitted and the conclusions therefrom deducible, that, taking it all in all, the student council gives marked evidence of notable practical value. Moreover, that this practical value extends to something more substantial and vital than the coun-

cil's being a mere device in the furthering of better, easier, or less unacceptable discipline. In fine, that, as we see it, that the student council has given and continues to give marked proof of its power and influence in the broadening and deepening of character; it has, in the main, fulfilled what we consider to be its chief aim or purpose--that of character-training for both individual and social advantages and effectiveness.

## CHAPTER IV

### ORGANIZATION OF A STUDENT COUNCIL IN A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

In the introduction to this paper, we said that we would conclude with a plan or constitution of the organization and general functioning of a student council in a Catholic high school of rather small enrollment. We herewith submit this plan. Sacred Heart is a coeducational Catholic high school with an enrollment of some seventy students. A student council was organized here in January, 1930, and has proved in the main quite satisfactory.

This plan or constitution, which in all essential features is based upon actual experience, should furnish a practical working basis for a like or somewhat similar constitution in any Catholic high school of small enrollment. Indeed, in all its fundamental details, the subjoined constitution could well serve its purpose even in a much larger school, the differences

incident upon higher enrollment being rather of degree than of kind.

At the close will be found a few more or less general remarks upon such points as we feel may be helpful to those who are considering the establishment of a student council, or who may be somewhat at a loss to account for the failure, in whole or in part, of a council already established.

Amos has pointed out most effectively the purpose of a Constitution. He says in part:

"If constitutions do not reveal something of the ideals to be attained and give some notion of how these ideals should be realized through the machinery of government, what are they for? Are they not the embodiment of the ancient saying, 'As a man desires, so he thinks; as he thinks, so he acts; and as he acts, so he attains'" (2:441)?



CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Article 1  
Name and Motto

Section 1. This organization shall be known as The Student Council of Sacred Heart.

Section 2. The motto shall be,--Lift Up Your Hearts.

Article 2  
Membership

Section 1. Active membership in the association is open to all regularly registered High School students of Sacred Heart.

Section 2. All active members possess equal rights in this organization.

Section 3. It is incumbent on the members of this organization to be in harmony with the spirit of the School.

Article 3  
Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be to direct the general activities of the school, to arouse the loyalty of the students and to promote a perfect co-operation with the faculty by supporting the ideals of Sacred Heart.

**Article 4**  
**Form of Organization**

The Student Council of Sacred Heart shall consist of the officers of the class sections.

**Article 5**  
**The Student Council**

1. The Student Council is the representative body of the school, consisting as it does of officers from all classes approved by the Faculty and elected by fellow students. Its chief duty is to set before the student body the ideals of Sacred Heart not in words only but also in actions.
2. The members, individually, shall be responsible to the Student Council for the good citizenship of the members of the class sections.
3. Appointments of committees: Appointments shall be made by the President in consultation with the Vice-President and approved of by the Student Council Adviser.
4. No resignation will be accepted from appointments made by the Student Council unless an adequate reason for the resignation be given.

**Article 6**  
**Duties of Officers of the Student Council**

- A. President.

1. The President is the school leader and shall have within his province all matters which concern the welfare and honor of the school.
2. He shall preside at meetings of the Student Council, and shall present to the Student Council matters of school interest.
3. He shall assist at and may preside at assembly meetings.
4. He shall have power to call special meetings of the Student Council.
5. He shall be chairman of the Discipline Committee.

B. Vice-President.

1. The Vice-President shall be ready at all times to act as President. In the event of the removal or resignation of the President, he shall act as President until a new President is elected.
2. He shall be chairman of the Spiritual Activities Committee.

C. Secretary-Treasurer.

1. The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep the minutes of the Student Council meetings.
2. He shall attend to and keep a record of all written correspondence of the Student Council.

3. He shall notify members of the Student Council in case of a special meeting.

4. He shall attend to the assisting of the class sections for meeting such financial obligations as may be incurred by the Student Council.

5. He shall be chairman of the Sanitation Committee.

#### D. Elections.

The President of the Student Council is elected by a general ballot. The names of eligible candidates shall be posted a week in advance of the time set for the election.

Every high-school student in good standing has a right to vote for President:--nominations for Vice-President, and for Secretary-Treasurer, are made and voted upon by the members of the Student Council.

### Article 7 Officers

1. The officers of the Student Council shall be:

1. A President to be elected from the officers of the senior class.

2. A Vice-President to be elected from the officers of the junior class.

3. A Secretary-Treasurer to be elected from the

officers of the sophomore class.

2. Duties of the President shall be:

1. To represent the student body at all times in social and business affairs.
2. To preside in all cases where the Student Body is concerned.

3. Duties of the Vice-President:

1. To preside in absence of or at request of President.
2. To assist the President at all times in social and business affairs.

4. Duties of Secretary-Treasurer:

1. To keep the minutes of the meeting of the Student Council.
2. To post notices of meetings of the Student Council.
3. To attend to the correspondence of the Student Council.
4. To collect all money due to the Student Council.

5. The above-named officers shall serve for a term of one semester. They may be re-elected for the second semester.

6. In the event of the resignation from office of the

President of the Student Council, the office shall pass to the Vice-President.

A meeting shall then be held of the Student Council to elect a Vice-President.

#### Article 8 Class Section Organization

The two home rooms shall be organized as units with the following officers:

1. A Class President chosen from the senior class of the room.
2. A Class Vice-President chosen from the junior class of the room.
3. A Class Secretary chosen from the senior class of the room.
4. A Class Treasurer chosen from the junior class of the room.

#### Article 9 Duties of Officers of Class Section

A. Class President:

1. The Class President shall have charge of the room in the absence of the teacher.
2. He shall conduct class meetings.
3. He shall assist in maintaining the general dis-

cipline in the school by appointing, under the direction of the adviser, from his class-members, the following:

- a. The Discipline Committee.
- b. The Sanitation Committee.
- c. The Spiritual Activities Committee.

B. Class Vice-President:

1. He shall act as Class-President in the absence of the regular class officer.

2. He shall be the Health Official of his class. It shall be his aim and purpose to arouse and stimulate interest for better health and health habits in his room.

- a. By aiding all students in the formation of good health habits.
- b. By assisting the teacher in having healthful conditions in the room.
- c. By standing for clean habits, clean speech, and clean sports.
- d. He may, with the approval of the Class-President select and appoint class-members to act as his assistants.

C. Class Secretary:

1. He shall record and preserve the minutes of regular class meetings in a book provided for that purpose.

2. He shall record the absences each day for the adviser; as also the absences of committee members for the chairman of the Committees.

D. Class Treasurer:

1. He shall be responsible for the handling and rendering account of the class finances and for the collecting and rendering account of all necessary assessments.

Article 10  
Duties of the Committees

A. The Discipline Committee:

1. The Discipline Committee shall consist of four members, who shall be denominated "Marshals;" one being appointed by the Class President from each class.

2. The Discipline Committee shall have charge of the hall during the change of classes, and shall have the power to send to the Class Section Adviser any student whose conduct is considered as detrimental to good order and discipline.



3. The Marshal's period of service shall be two weeks.

4. In the absence of any one member of the committee, the President of the class to which the absentee belongs shall appoint another student to act as Committeeman for that day.

B. Sanitation Committee:

1. The Sanitation Committee shall be appointed by the Class President for a term of two weeks.

2. This Committee shall supervise the condition of the halls and lavatories and school grounds--the school premises in general--and shall make recommendations to the Student Council concerning comfort, cleanliness, etc.

3. The Treasurer of the Student Council shall be the Chairman of the Sanitation Committee.

C. The Spiritual Activities Committee:

1. The Spiritual Activities Committee shall consist of four members, one being appointed from and by each class.

2. The President of the Student Council is the Chairman of the Spiritual Activities Committee.

3. This Committee shall promote spiritual activities

by posting from time to time posters and notices concerning religious subjects. It shall also be the duty of this Committee to see that the Holy Water fonts in the rooms are kept clean and supplied.

4. The Chairman shall apportion to each committee as appointed the various duties of the Committee as follows:

1. To collect stamps and tinfoil.
2. To care for the bulletin board.
3. To remail literature.
4. To foster mission activities.
5. To suggest and carry out programs of social service (e. g., aiding the poor, etc.).

#### Article 11 Dues and Assessments

Section 1. There shall be no regular dues or assessments, other than the initial (semester) membership fee below referred to.

Section 2. All members, however, are subject to tax (the amount to be determined by the Student Council) at any time that a treasury fund is needed.

Section 3. All members shall pay a membership fee of ten cents, this payment to be made within two weeks after

enrollment each semester.

Section 4. A member who has not paid the membership fee will not be permitted to put any motion before the Council, or to take active part in any discussion, election, etc.

#### Article 12 Amendments

Amendments may be made to this constitution by a two-thirds vote of the Student Council. All such amendments, both before and after their being drafted, must have the approval of the Student Council Adviser.

#### Article 13 The Principal's Power

The School Principal is a member of the Student Council and has the veto power over all actions taken by the Student Council.

#### Article 14 The Class Adviser's Power

The Class Adviser is a member of the Council in each class, and has the veto power over all actions taken by his class section.

#### Article 15 Duties of the Students

- A. Each student should so conduct himself that a minimum of control from outside should be necessary.
- B. The good student should be honest, loyal, courteous, and cheerful, and a credit to Catholic educational standards, which Sacred Heart seeks to uphold.
- C. He should waste neither time, materials nor opportunities.
- D. He should stand for clean speech, clean habits, and clean companionship.
- E. The good student co-operates. No matter what his individual preferences are, he should be ever willing to work for the greatest good of the greatest number.
- F. He respects the badge of authority.
- G. He should be eager to uphold on every occasion the honor and traditions of Sacred Heart.

#### GENERAL RULES FOR ORDER

- 1. There should be no talking in the corridors during school hours.
- 2. Quiet should be maintained during study hours.  
Prepare for work before call.
- 3. Silence must be kept in the library at all times, particularly from 8:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.

4. Any student who openly shows disrespect toward the Student Council shall be suspended from the organization.
5. No single notice will be posted longer than one week on the general bulletin board.
6. Only students assigned for 'posting' shall write or place notices on the bulletin board.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we offer a summary of the results attained by the student council of Sacred Heart. These general remarks as to the organization and functioning of the student council, based upon experience and observation will reveal the extent to which these objectives, though of a non-quantitative character, were realized.

1. Before the Student Council, as such, was formally projected and organized, a remote preparation was made. This consisted chiefly in more particularly emphasizing such matters as self-control, self-sacrifice, and the necessity of high ideals of service.
2. Again, spirit rather than form was stressed. That is to say, attention was directed to the value and necessity of a healthy esprit de corps over and above the mere technical details of organization, officers, duties, etc. Of course, special time and attention was given to explaining and exemplifying the rules of parliamentary procedure.

3. While endeavoring to comprehensively cover the field of activity as offered by local conditions, simplicity or organization was sought. The form given in the preceding pages, while apparently rather intricate, will be found upon closer inspection to merely outline such details(organization, officials, activities, etc.) as are essential to the efficient functioning of any student council, large or small.

4. At first the need of the council did not seem to be realized by the students. They enjoyed the meetings and simpler parliamentary procedure, but there was a notable lack of any sense of responsibility.

The officers, for example, showed little or no initiative; did no planning or organizing of their own accord; scampered off as soon as the meeting was adjourned, leaving the gavel, minute-records, etc., on the table, paying no attention to replacing in order desks, chairs, etc., used in the course of the meeting. Again, the officers were continually questioning the Adviser as to 'how they should go about arranging or doing this or that'. In general, as stated above, there was, on the part of both officers and members, a notable, almost hopeless lack of anything like a sense of initiative or personal responsibility.

However, by the end of the term (June, 1931), not only have the officers developed notable character-traits in the matter of initiative and personal responsibility, but the entire student-body (constituting the rank and file membership of the council) also manifested these traits, and were alert and eager in offering helpful suggestions and in seeing to it that what was decided upon or projected was also carried into effect.

5. Another important character-trait that participation in this student council organization brought about and developed was the following. When first installed, the officers manifestly did not understand, or at any rate failed to appreciate or realize, that they had been chosen and elected 'to serve' not 'to be served'-- indeed, it was the latter attitude that prevailed. All duties and positions which brought them "into the lime-light" were monopolized vigorously and thoroughly by the officers. Where, however, there was question of some servile, or less publicity--attracting work or project, the officers appointed 'a committee',--from the general membership. As a practical instance; in the matter of delivering invitations--to the Reverend Fathers or the faculty members--the officers assumed



this detail or duty as their personal prerogative. Whereas, such minor and less honorable duties as 'the general care of the grounds', 'looking after athletic and playground equipment', etc., were (officially!) delegated, or relegated, to the student council members in general.

Here, again, the close of this year (1931) saw this attitude quite changed, in fact practically abandoned, as the officers even sought to yield place and honor when, without any neglect of official obligations, preference could be given to non-officers on occasions affording public notice or individual advantage.

6. In connection with our formation and adoption of a formal constitution, the following may be of interest:

The Adviser adopted the plan of allowing the students themselves, of themselves, to arrive at a realization of the necessity of a formal constitution. Consequently, although parliamentary procedure was used and insisted upon from the start, nothing was said about any definite code of regulations or any constitution whereby the aims and purposes of the student council were to be carried out. Gradually, however, the students themselves came to sense the need of more definite ruling and a

more definite program of action both for the organization itself and for the securing of its specific aims or objectives.

At this juncture, the carefully planned constitution was skillfully introduced--gradually in more and more detail--by the Adviser. Even then, the main emphasis was placed rather upon ideals and broad underlying principles than upon the mere technical details. Thus, gradually and in a practical way, through their own realization of the need of an organized systematized form of procedure, was the constitution sought and studied and eventually adopted in its entirety by the students themselves.

7. Our experience of the value of the student council in the promotion of school-spirit may be presented concretely in the following specific instances:

Prior to the formation or organization of our student council, no pep-meetings of any consequence had been held. Our first pep-meeting--just after the organization of the council--still lives in the memories of those present. A few offered speeches were made, much to the embarrassment of the speakers and the amusement of their auditors. Even these speeches were of the

set-speech-and-appointed-speaker type, as no volunteer speakers could be found. So formal and artificial was the whole proceeding that all felt a sense of relief when the meeting adjourned.

Here, again, a few months of participation in student council procedure and activity worked wonders. A spirit of loyalty--to school and team, etc.--began to be apparent in strong and persevering support even in the face of defeat. This spirit manifested itself also in a fairer, less selfish, attitude toward rival teams,--as these same competitors could, and did testify.

That in all competition at home and abroad, high standards of play and general conduct were observed, is borne witness to by the testimonial letters which followed upon the school's travels into opponent towns and territory. Coming from a variety of sources of observation--hotel managers, merchants, superintendents, and others eminently qualified to observe and estimate--these letters in testimony of good conduct and clean sportsmanship are treasured in the records of our student council as proof positive of the council's influence for good upon our school spirit in all its various

manifestations.

8. Another notable result consequent upon student council influence and guidance is seen in what we may designate as a better understanding, in general, of religious obligations in the matter of attendance at church services, as also, even in the performance of works of supererogation. For example, absences or tardinesses in connection with Mass and religious services have become noticeably fewer.

Again, whereas, before the organization of the student council, the securing of the attendance of the choir at any but one Mass, had been a matter almost of compulsion, this sentiment or spirit has since disappeared and a mere request for suggestion is now sufficient to assure the choir's presence and whole-hearted response.

We might remark here, in explanation, that at Sacred Heart, the student council is responsible for the Junior Choir, which choir takes care of a large part of the singing at Sunday and week-day Masses, also at funerals and other church services. Here, the realization, brought about by the student council, that each and every individual counts, has led to a decided improvement in school-spirit and, in consequence, in the qual-

ity of the choir's work. Sacred Heart has come to feel and take a genuine and justifiable pride in its school choir.

9. It has been particularly gratifying to notice the marked ability which the students give evidence of in estimating and selecting their leaders. The officers are chosen and elected on actual individual personal merit, not, as so often happens, because of mere family, social or financial standing.

10. "Think for the happiness of others; and let your thoughts find expression in noble deeds." This sentiment of the Council is borne out in practice, as the following instance - one among many - illustrates. It so happens that a small number of children of foreign parentage are enrolled at Sacred Heart. These children are, for the most part, very poor; but neither their poverty nor their language (foreign) is any handicap or embarrassment. The Student Council sees to it that these children are made to feel at home. When the weather has been inclement, the students have arranged to take these children home in cars. Those who, from sad experience, know the peculiar difficulties occasioned - even among children - by differences of nationality or

social standing will be particularly interested in the above mentioned results.

In general, an increased sense of individual responsibility for the general welfare is outstandingly evident. The general improvement in character traits while progressive rather than abrupt, has been gratifying in the extreme. Experience has shown that a well organized and tactfully directed student council is well worth while for both the student body and the school.

All that has been offered in this chapter - both in the Constitution in itself and in the application in practice of its rulings and principles - plainly indicates how desirable character traits can be, and are being, developed by or through a properly organized and smoothly functioning student council. Let us add, as a point worth noting, that here - as in every modern and rightly handled council - there is a minimum of faculty and a maximum of student direction and action.

Even a passing study of the constitution itself makes clear the incentive, the inspiration - the powerful force for developing and deepening suitable character traits - that emanates from the rules and regulations considered even in themselves. Order, system, thorough-

ness, attention to detail, definite objective, high ideals of thought and conduct, high sense of duty and personal responsibility, respect for duly constituted authority--to say nothing of the mechanical or technical details of definite organization toward a definite objective--all this even the constitution, considered merely in itself, impresses upon the plastic and receptive mind and heart of youth.

And, when we turn to the results (some few are mentioned more specifically on pages - )--it is again clear that even the technical observance of this constitution's regulations and directions (the mere letter of the law!) leads to speech and conduct and a social-sense rather above that normally found in boisterous, rough-and-ready, self-seeking youth.

Nor do we offer this particular constitution and its observance as anything exceptional. Indeed, we are rather inclined to rate it as merely the average (at least for schools of the type concerned), perhaps even below the average. For, while this constitution is (we humbly submit) rather complete and thorough in scope and detail, still, the council in question is rather young, as councils go, and, as all who have ex-

perience know, time is needed to build up those traditions of respect and obedience and loyalty and service which are fostered and strengthened by a well organized and skillfully, sympathetically, directed student council as, perhaps, by no other one force or influence in the student and school life of today.



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The thesis "Student Councils as an Agency for Character Education in Secondary Schools," written by Sister Mary Wendelin Shean, has been accepted by the Graduate School of Loyola University with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree conferred.

Austin G. Schmidt, S. J.

July, 1931

Joseph C. Thompson

July, 1931

Dr. William H. Johnson

July, 1931